

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2023
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Saxton called the September 22, 2023, Town Council Workshop meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Attendance and Absences

In attendance were Mayor Tim Saxton and Councilmembers Randy Bartholomew, Bob Biciocchi, Edie Dondero, Chris Keefe, and Tim Shaw; Town Finance Director Renee McDorman, Chief Jason Lovins, and Town Clerk Matt Amerling. Councilman Derek Abbott and Town Manager Maureen Hartman were absent. Public attendees: 3. Virtual attendees: 4.

Mayor Saxton stated Councilman Derek Abbott had contacted him and resigned from Town Council, effective immediately.

Public Comment

Steve Chantler, 422 Tamarack Drive, stated he supports the reduction of residential seasonal parking permits from four (4) to two (2).

Carol Beutel, 1004 S. Ocean Drive, stated, regarding the removal of trash cans from the walkways along Ocean Drive, she thinks it's a very bad idea to have them removed. Ocean Drive residents have problems with trash being put in their trash cans now and it's not the right trash as dog poop gets thrown in the recycling bin, they're left with people's broken beach chairs, and Town staff as well as residents are picking up trash and other people's dog poop. Ms. Beutel stated that maybe we need to investigate redesigning the enclosures.

Carl Bittenbender, 141 Layton Drive, stated, regarding the parking permit reduction, it needs to be encompassed with some other measures. The first being a concern about the revenue as the Town is obviously going to see a fifty percent (50%) decrease in revenue. Mr. Bittenbender stated with regards to matching parking inventory, we're not worried about the west side of Coastal Highway, but we are worried about the east side, and that's a little bit contradictory. If the Town is going to reduce the number of passes and cut them in half, the inventory doesn't change; the inventory is still the same, and the number of passes that would then be sold still exceeds the inventory. The Town should mark the parking spots to show what is a legal, enforceable parking spot, so that parking enforcement can make sure people are parking responsibly and legally. Regarding removing the trash receptacles, Mr. Bittenbender agrees with Ms. Beutel that it would be a bad idea to remove them.

Discussion on proposed ordinance 211-23 regarding the reduction of parking passes from four to two or any other potential options presented by Council members (Biciocchi)

Councilman Bob Biciocchi stated he distributed a memo to Council regarding his reasoning for his requesting a reduction in parking permits, which is to promote safe bike and pedestrian travel to the beach where possible. Part of that policy has put bike racks in place which have taken up parking spaces. Councilman Biciocchi stated the reality is the Town has had a significant reduction of parking spaces on the east side of Coastal Highway and this is also exacerbated by construction. The second reason is to balance the number of parking permits with available parking spaces. Councilman Biciocchi further stated there is also recognition that Council wants to

discourage the improper use of permits to non-residents. The Council wants to be revenue neutral in any change they make and perhaps there's a policy the Council can adopt that will increase parking revenue, so no revenue is lost.

Councilman Biciocchi stated the ordinance draft suggests reducing the four (4) seasonal parking permits to two (2) seasonal permits and possibly convert the other two (2) to weekly passes that can be designated to any week residents want to use them. Councilman Biciocchi stated with this proposed system, it will help deter those who currently buy all four (4) permits but hand out or sell one (1) or two (2) permits to friends for the season. Councilman Tim Shaw stated he lives along Ocean Drive and he's not sure that anyone who lives on the east side of Coastal Highway needs a parking permit, unless they're handicapped, as those residents are one block at most from the beach and they have their own parking area with their driveway. Councilman Shaw stated he agrees that people on the east side should have the option to buy two (2) of the proposed weekly passes if they have an overflow situation, but he doesn't believe that anyone on the east side needs a season permit; so, the Town might be able to cut down the number of seasonal permits by prohibiting them on that side of Coastal Highway.

Councilwoman Edie Dondero stated she supports Councilman Biciocchi's proposal of reducing the seasonal residential parking permits to two (2), and she thinks it's important that the Town offer the weekly option for residents. Councilwoman Dondero stated she is also intrigued by Councilman Shaw's idea of limiting seasonal passes for residents on the east side of Coastal Highway as well. She thinks it is a realistic proposal that the Council should perhaps consider as part of this ordinance change. Councilman Shaw stated the replacement permits should be more expensive, so that there is no likelihood of someone trying to exploit the situation and they still end up with four (4) permits.

Councilman Randy Bartholomew stated on the east side of Coastal Highway there's approximately one-hundred-fifteen (115) parking spaces, excluding the handicapped and lifeguard spaces. It is a small number, and the total number of permits sold this past year was approximately two-thousand-six hundred (2,600). Councilman Bartholomew stated that if everybody who bought three (3) or four (4) permits, who may purchase the maximum two (2) permits, there is going to be about a sixteen-thousand-dollar (\$16,000) reduction to revenue. He supports dropping the number to three (3) permits, not two (2). He indicated that we should not offer the weekly permits as that would be an administrative nightmare. Councilman Bartholomew commented to Councilman Shaw's statement about residents on the east side having room for parking in their driveways, if their driveways are big enough for three (3) or four (4) vehicles, then Councilman Shaw is right; however, there are residents over there who don't have big driveways and do need permits for family and friends just so they can have a place to park when visiting. If Council reduces the number of residential seasonal parking permits to three (3), it helps the total number of permits, and from a revenue loss perspective, it will be closer to seven-thousand dollars (\$7,000). If the Town goes to three (3) seasonal passes, the first two (2) could be the current twenty-dollar (\$20) price, and the third pass could be forty dollars (\$40).

Councilwoman Chris Keefe stated she is all for just two (2) residential seasonal parking permits. She indicated that when you start separating oceanside people who can't have this privilege, or Cat Hill, or people behind York Beach Mall, it starts getting divisive. She thinks everyone should have the same opportunity. Councilwoman Keefe commented that the town could provide a public transport of some kind to pick up people at Town Hall or at two (2) locations on weekends, and people would be able to get to the beach with their stuff, to help relieve the parking issue. She is just throwing out ideas because she thinks Council is never going to solve the problem and make everybody happy. Councilwoman Keefe further stated giving more permits actually makes it worse, because now you have more people fighting for the same spaces, whereas if the Town gives everybody the ability to have two (2), then residents have to figure out within their household how to share.

Mayor Saxton stated that it's clear to him there is a consensus that Council should reduce the amount of seasonal residential parking permits, whether it's down to three (3) or two (2); however, he is not a fan of the weekly parking permits as it does have an increased cost to the Town. Mayor Saxton stated before the Council goes any further with this, he thinks they should refer it to the Budget & Finance Committee (B&F) so they can look into different options and come back with how the Town can make this change revenue neutral. He thinks it's only fair to our constituents that if Council is going to reduce the number of parking permits, then residents should know how much Council is going to increase the cost of the permits. Mayor Saxton stated he doesn't agree with Councilman Biciocchi's notion of charging more money for a third permit being punitive because a lot of towns do such a thing, and the people know they're still not promised a parking spot. After discussion, the Council agreed to have B&F review for revenue costs at its next meeting, then revisiting the ordinance in October.

Discussion and possible action regarding removing the trash cans at the walkways on Ocean Drive (Dondero)

Councilwoman Dondero stated Republic Services has requested the Town to modify the trash bin holders at the walkways along Ocean Drive, because their workers are having difficulty getting the trash cans out of the bins and into the trucks. Councilwoman Dondero stated that public works has been looking at the idea of modifying the bins to make it easier to get the cans in and out. The cost the Town was quoted was initially eight hundred dollars (\$800) per holder, which seems to Councilwoman Dondero like an inordinate amount of money for something she's not sure is necessary. This year, the Town did not have trash cans on the beach due to the beach replenishment, but normally there are trash cans on the beach. Councilwoman Dondero is hearing from conversations with public works as well as just personal observation, those cans on Ocean Drive aren't really serving the public who are going to the beach. She observed that much of the waste in the trash cans is coming from private homes along Ocean Drive, with no differentiation between trash and recycling. She asked if cans on the beach could remain and potentially remove cans or reduce the number of them on Ocean Drive.

Councilman Shaw stated he's not in favor of removing the cans but agrees the bins should be renovated so they make it easier for the trash collectors to remove them. Councilwoman Keefe stated she agrees with Councilwoman Dondero and the Town needs more garbage bins, specifically up there for dog waste. She likes the idea of new bins, but \$800 doesn't seem too much, considering the high cost of wood right now. After a lengthy discussion, the Council agreed to research rebuilding the bins to make it easier for the trash collectors to empty them.

Discussion and selection of new members for the Resiliency Committee (Saxton)

Councilwoman Dondero stated she hasn't had a chance to speak with others who are interested in joining the Resiliency Committee, but she is ready to appoint applicants Michael Powell and Joan Marini. Mayor Saxton stated Dr. Marini expressed her agreement to resign from the Canal Water Quality Committee (CWQ) to join this committee; and applicant Chris Vanuga would rather retain his chairman position on the Canal Water Quality Committee than leave to be on the Resiliency Committee, as it is required within the Town committee guidelines. Councilman Shaw motioned to appoint Michael Powell and Joan Marini to the Resiliency Committee, seconded by Councilman Biciocchi. Motion carried 6-0.

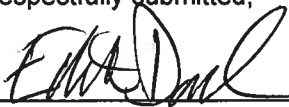
Discussion and possible action to appoint a new member to the Board of Adjustment (Saxton)

Mayor Saxton stated, out of the two (2) applicants, he would like to motion to nominate and appoint Marlin Van Horn to fill the open vacancy on the Board of Adjustment (BOA). Councilwoman Dondero seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

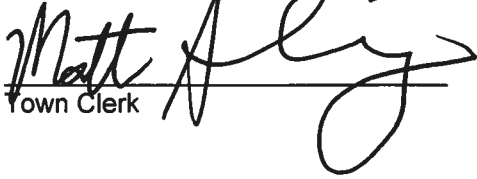
Adjournment

Motion by Councilwoman Dondero, second by Councilman Shaw, to adjourn the September 22, 2023, Town Council Workshop Meeting at 10:13 a.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Council Secretary



Town Clerk

10/13/2023
Date of Approval